

Willow Leaf Galls

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Description: A leaf gall is an unusual growth of plant's cells on leaves. The galls are usually formed on the younger leaves and galls develop into the leaves as they grow. They appear to be green lumps and then later in the season they will turn brown or red. The galls are oval and about 6 mm long. There may be only one or several galls on a single twig or leaf. In general, the leaf galls do not cause serious problems to the plant. They are just very unsightly when in large numbers on the plant.

Cause: The cause of the willow leaf gall is a Redgall Sawfly, or scientifically known as *Pontania proxima*, a type of primitive wasp. As the tree's leaves are expanding the adult sawflies insert the eggs into the expanding tissues in early June. A single female is able to lay up to 50 eggs. This is what causes the leaf to swell into a lump or chamber, which nourishes and protects the developing grub. Most of them emerge by fall and over winter in a cocoon in the leaf litter on the surrounding ground. There is only one generation per year.

Remedy: The best way to get rid of willow leaf galls are to prune out the infected branches or leaves of the tree, and make sure to burn the branches to destroy the grubs. Other than this there is no effective mechanical or chemical control when dealing with galls.

Works Cited

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